

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /078 W
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P R 091455Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0460
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 0347

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IS, IT, EEC
SUBJECT: VISIT TO ISRAEL BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

SUMMARY: THE VISIT TO ISRAEL BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS PROBABLY STRENGTHENED THE
ALREADY FAVORABLE RELATIONS BETWEEN THAT INSTITUTION
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT.
AS PART OF A RECENT SERIES OF ITALIAN-ISRAELI EXCHANGES,
IT HAS ALSO BENEFITED TO A LESSER EXTENT RELATIONS BETWEEN
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ROME AND JERUSALEM. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, EMILIO
COLOMBO, VISITED ISRAEL JANUARY 3-7 AS THE GUEST
OF KNESSET SPEAKER YITZHAK SHAMIR. COLOMBO MET WITH
PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, PRESIDENT KATZIR, AND MEMBERS
OF THE KNESSET'S EXCHANGE DELEGATION TO THE EUROPEAN

PARLIAMENT IN STRASBOURG.

2. THE ISRAELI PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT DURING COLOMBO'S MEETINGS WITH KNESSET MEMBERS AND THE PRIME MINISTER THE MAIN TOPICS OF CONVERSATION WERE ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH THE NINE AND THE COMMUNITY'S POLICIES TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST. ACCORDING TO THE JERUSALEM POST, THE PRIME MINISTER BRIEFED COLOMBO ON THE RADIO-TELEPHONE CALL HE HAD JUST RECEIVED (JANUARY 4) FROM PRESIDENT CARTER ON HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH SADAT. (AT A LATER DEBRIEFING FOR EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS, COLOMBO DESCRIBED BEGIN AS BEING IN AN ELATED MOOD DUE TO THE CALL.) THE PRIME MINISTER REPORTEDLY ASKED OF COLOMBO WHAT HE HAD ASKED OF CALLAGHAN: "LET US NEGOTIATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITHOUT OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT. LET US HAVE NO MORE ONE-SIDED DECLARATIONS WHICH SPELL TROUBLE FOR ISRAEL..." BEGIN REPORTEDLY TOLD COLOMBO THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN THE CURRENT STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS AS THIS WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO THE EMERGENCE OF A PALESTINIAN STATE INIMICAL TO THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, ADDING THE REQUEST "TELL YOUR COLLEAGUES IN EUROPE THAT IF THEY CANNOT SUPPORT ISRAEL'S PEACE PLANS FOR ANY REASON, WE COUNT ON THEM TO REMAIN STRICTLY NEUTRAL AND AVOID ONE-SIDED STATEMENTS."

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3. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE JANUARY 5, COLOMBO LAUDED BEGIN'S PEACE PLAN AS A VERY IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION, IN SPIRIT AS WELL AS IN CONTENT, TO THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATION PROCESS AND REPEATEDLY STRESSED COOPERATION WITH EUROPE. HE SAID THAT IN LINE WITH THE PARLIAMENT'S EMPHASIS ON STRENGTHENING EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO CHAMBERS, A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS HAS BEEN ARRANGED FOR NOVEMBER 1978 BETWEEN THE PARLIAMENT AND THE KNESSET TO DISCUSS AND STUDY POLITICAL AND AGRICULTURAL ISSUES. THE AGENDA FOR THE NOVEMBER DIALOGS WILL INCLUDE A REVIEW OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICAL SITUATION, THE COMPLEX OF RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY, AND MATTERS OF AGRICULTURE (WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON IRRIGATION PROJECTS AND PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT IN ARID REGIONS). DURING THE MEETINGS AT THE KNESSET, MK BENJAMIN HALEVI PRESENTED THE VISITOR WITH A MEMORANDUM ON THE ARAB BOYCOTT AND MKS DANIEL ROSOLIO AND MENAHEM SAVIDOR STRESSED THEIR CONCERN AT INCREASED EEC CUSTOMS DUTIES ON ISRAELI CITRUS PRODUCTS.

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BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

4. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN A RECENT INCREASE IN EXCHANGES BETWEEN ITALY AND ISRAEL, EVIDENCED BY THE VISITS TO ISRAEL BY COLOMBO AND FANFANI AND BY DAYAN'S UPCOMING VISIT TO ITALY, AN ITALIAN EMBASSY OFFICER WARNED THAT THE VISIT HAS TO BE SEEN NOT IN BILATERAL TERMS BUT THE CONTEXT OF THE PEACE PROCESS AND COLOMBO'S POSITION IN THE PARLIAMENT. HE DID, HOWEVER, ADMIT THAT THE VISIT, BY VIRTUE OF COLOMBO BEING ITALIAN, HAD SOME NATURAL SPINOFF BENEFIT FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN ROME AND JERUSALEM.

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HE DID NOT FEEL IT LIKELY THAT THE EXCHANGES WERE PART OF A BEGIN GOVERNMENT DESIGN TO USE ITALY, AS IT HAS DONE WITH BRITAIN, AS A POINT OF ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, ALTHOUGH ISRAEL IS NO DOUBT AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL OF SUCH VISITS FOR MODERATING THE ITALIANS' VIEWS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. THE ISRAELI POSITION HAS REMAINED THE SAME--TO SEEK TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH EUROPE IN ORDER TO LIMIT DAMAGE BY POSSIBLE PRO-ARAB STATEMENTS.

5. THE ITALIANS THEMSELVES, ACCORDING TO THE ITALIAN EMBASSY, WERE A BIT SURPRISED AT COLOMBO'S STATEMENTS PRAISING BEGIN'S PLAN. THEY TOLD US THEY SAW A CONTRADICTION IN THE ISRAELI POSITION IN THAT ISRAEL WANTS EUROPE NOT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE MIDDLE EAST BUT AT THE SAME TIME BELIEVES SOME PRESSURE SHOULD BE EXERTED BY EUROPE TO MAKE SADAT MORE FLEXIBLE.

6. COMMENT: THE VISIT PROBABLY REPRESENTS IN PART AN EFFORT BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO KEEP AS WELL INFORMED AS OTHER COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS ABOUT A FAST CHANGING SITUATION. THE PARLIAMENT HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN REGARDED HERE AS MORE PRO-ISRAELI THEN THE OTHER EC INSTITUTIONS AND THE VISIT BY ITS PRESIDENT THEREBY SERVES BOTH BEGIN, WHO FELT HE COULD GET A FAIRER HEARING FROM THIS BODY, AND THE EUROPEANS, WHO CAN, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THIS FEELING, LEARN MORE FROM THE ISRAELIS THAN THEIR GOVERNMENTS CAN. WE HAVE HEARD IT SAID THAT THE GOI SEES THE PARLIAMENT AS THE BEST LONG-RANGE HOPE FOR ISRAELI INTERESTS IN EUROPE AND THAT ISRAEL WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS INSTITUTION IN THE HOPE THAT ITS DEMOCRATIC NOTIONS INCREASINGLY INFLUENCE FRENCHMEN AND ITALIANS

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TO BECOME MORE SUPPORTIVE OF ISRAEL AS THEY BECOME LESS NATIONALISTIC AND MORE EUROPEAN.

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